

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

1. **Earlville manure spill a reminder to report spills quickly**
2. **Tire fire near Tiffin extinguished**

## **EARLVILLE MANURE SPILL A REMINDER TO REPORT SPILLS QUICKLY**

EARLVILLE — A rural Earlville producer worked quickly to minimize damage to the environment following a manure spill at a dairy cattle confinement Tuesday.

Manure from an overflowing storage pit ran across a field on the Tom Engelken farm for approximately 1,000 feet before entering an unnamed tributary to Penn Creek. The overflow was discovered on Tuesday afternoon, but it is unknown when the discharge began.

Upon discovering the spill, Engelken contacted the DNR and quickly worked to hold back the overflow from the storage pit by using a berm and placing soil at the area of the leak. The DNR advised Engelken to place a dike in the stream and recover the manure.

Engelken reported that he recovered approximately 5,000 gallons of contaminated water from the stream and was able to capture another 2,600 gallons of manure before it reached the stream. He has also removed approximately 33,000 gallons of manure from the storage pit to prevent additional overflow. Less than a half-mile of the stream was impacted, and no fish kill has been observed.

“He did the right thing by calling us so we could assist with stopping the discharge and initiating cleanup,” said Sue Miller, an environmental specialist with the Manchester DNR field office.

Manure spills should be reported as soon as possible, so that DNR staff can assist with stopping the spill and cleanup. By law, manure spills must be reported to the DNR within six hours of occurrence or discovery. Within normal business hours, spills should be

reported to the local DNR field office. Outside of normal business hours, spills should be called into the 24-hour reporting line at (515) 281-8694.

The spill also serves as a reminder to producers as they begin applying manure to fields.

“Producers need to keep an eye on the levels of their storage pits, especially with spring getting close,” Miller said. “Spring rains can be unpredictable, so it’s important to be aware of the level of your storage pits in case of a large rainfall.”

Iowa law requires producers to maintain one foot of freeboard, the distance between the top of the storage pit and the water level, on concrete storage pits. Earthen storage pits are required to maintain two feet of freeboard.

**For more information, contact Sue Miller at (563) 927-2640.**

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## **TIRE FIRE NEAR TIFFIN EXTINGUISHED**

TIFFIN — Cleanup should begin soon on the remains of an unintentional tire pile fire that began last weekend near Tiffin.

The fire occurred about three to four miles north of Tiffin, located in eastern Iowa near Iowa City. The fire began on Sunday, March 6 when a landowner lost control of a small burn pile. The burn pile quickly turned into a grass fire, which then ignited some waste tires on the property.

High winds caused the fire to travel downwind and cross onto another landowner’s property, where a larger pile of tires caught fire.

The DNR estimates that thousands of tires were involved in the fire, which was extinguished Monday afternoon. Staff from the DNR’s Washington field office will follow-up with the property owners to ensure cleanup of the tires and debris from the fire.

The open burning of waste tires is prohibited by state law, as it creates a number of environmental and health risks. The open burning of tires releases hazardous fumes and toxic gases, many of which are carcinogens (cancer-causing). It also contaminates soil and groundwater with toxins and carcinogens.

Illegally dumped tires can also provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the West Nile virus, other pests and rodents. Waste tires can be properly disposed through tire recyclers or processors, or with a tire dealer when purchasing new tires.

The DNR will continue to investigate the incident and will consider appropriate legal action.

For more information on proper waste tire disposal, visit  
[www.iowadnr.com/waste/recycling/tires/](http://www.iowadnr.com/waste/recycling/tires/)

**For more information, contact Josh Sobaski or Jim Sievers of the DNR's  
Washington field office at (319) 653-2135.**